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# CH 612 Contemporary Cults

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## Contemporary Cults

C H 612

Kenneth J. Collins, Professor

### I. General Purpose:

To help students gain a basic knowledge of the history and doctrines of the major religious cults extant in America so that they may: a) honestly and forthrightly refute their witness and b) effectively present the Gospel to those who have accepted their teachings.

### II. Specific Objectives:

1. To define cultism and identify its most prominent characteristics.
2. To understand the basic outline of the history and teachings of selected cults by becoming familiar with its literature and teachings.
3. To use these basic tools not only polemically but evangelistically as well in bringing cultists back to Christ and Christian truth.
4. To act intelligently, wisely and scripturally in every situation where we can minister pastorally to persons--especially young people--who are confused or threatened with confusion by the appeal of a cult.

### III. Requirements and the Basis for Grading

1. Completion of a major research paper on some significant aspect of the history, doctrine, or polity of a contemporary cult. 40% of the grade.
2. Two examinations: a mid-term and a final. 50% of the grade.
3. Class participation and attendance. 10% of the grade.
4. A reading report totalling 1,500 pages which includes the textbooks as well as any collateral reading.

### IV. Texts:

Tucker, Ruth. *Another Gospel: Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1989.

McGrath, Alister E. *Understanding Doctrine: What it is and Why it Matters*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1990

Sire, James W. *Scripture Twisting: Twenty Ways the Cults Misread the Bible*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1980.

### V. Topical Outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. The Importance of Doctrine
- III. Definitions: What is a Cult?

- IV. The Significance of Language
- V. Psychological Aspects of Cults
- VI. The History and Doctrine of Various Cults and Religious Movements

- A. Jehovah's Witnesses
- B. Christian Science
- C. Unity School of Christianity
- D. Mormonism
- E. Spiritism
- F. The Theosophical Society
- G. Swedenborgianism
- H. The Bahai Faith
- I. The Nation of Islam (Black Muslims)
- J. Herbert W. Armstrong
- K. The Unification Church
- L. The New Age Movement

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